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The taking of the Royall Galley of *Naunts* in *Brittaine*, from the *Spanyards* and Leaguers, with the releasement of 153. Galley slaues, that were in her: by *John Bilbrough*, Prentice of Lon- don, in November last.



Imprinted at London for Richard Oliffe,
and are to bee sould at his shop, in Paules
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1591.

The taking of the

City of London, 1648.



Printed by J. Sturges, at the Sign of the Anchor, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1648.

1648



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Royall Galley of *Naunts* in
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Galley slaues, that were in her: by
John Bilbrough, Prentice of Lon-
don. 1590.



Bout a seauen yeares since;
I *John Bilbrough* the son of
Richard Bilbrough, Citizen
and Marchant Taylor of
London, toke my aduenture
to the seas, where in short
space afterwards I was be-
trayed into the enemies
hands by the treacherie of a renegat English, not
worthy the name of my Countreyman; which
villanie of his extended not to mee alone, but to
seauē other of my companions; amongst whom,
my selfe and a Skot, remaining alieue, were carri-
ed captiues to the towne of *New-hauen* in *Nor-*

mandie: wherebeing condemned into the Galleyes in the moneth of September, 1584. and there hauing remained the space of fixe yeares, enduring exceeding miserie, as hunger, colde, stripes, with many violent torments; bereft of all hope for euer to behold my parents, friends, or natie countrey againe; by reason that hauing foure times in my captiuitie attempted the breaking of my chaines, I was foure times crost with contrarie fortune, my purpose discovered, and being taken, my sorrowfull wretchednes aggravated.

Thus increasing cares with dayes, euery daye being sharper than the sharpest sting of death; it chanced that Duke *Mercurie* the gouernour of *Naunton* in *Britaine* caused the Galley Royall of that Citie to be rigged and victualled to the seas, with commision to take all those that held with the League, aswell English, Scots, Flemmings as their owne nation on the Kings part. Thus floating on the seas, and rowing on the seas, now hether, now thether, expecting some prize worthy the attempting, it chaunced that the first daye of October 1590. being at anker in the Isle of *Vse* attending some ships passing either from *Rochel*, *Burwage*, or *Burdeaux*, we discovered early in the morning a great hulke of *Flanders*, which tooke her course for the Bay of *Bornese*, on the coast of *Poytours*, not far from the riuer of *Naunton*, whereupon rowing to the windward of the said hulke,

wee did beare after her : against whome our Gunner made diuers shootes, but could neuer hit her.

Then I ashamed at the vntowardnes of the saide Gunner, saide openlie, hee was vnworthie of his office, and that I durst lay my life to hit her the first shot, which the Captaine hearing, demaunded if I would vndertake to shoote at her, I answered him, that albeit I was a stranger, and had long continued in miserable captiuitie, yet if hee would accept of my seruice, I would performe the best that in mee lay. The Captaine vpon my answer, commanded my chaines to be taken off, promising if I did hit her, to giue mee my libertie.

Being in hope of freedome from this wretched seruitude, I tooke the Gonners charge in hand, and did my endeouour so well (through Gods assistance) that of eleuen shots, which I did make at her, I hit her with nine, but the hulke by the greatnes of the winde, escaped from out our danger.

The next day the Captaine called mee vnto him, saying, if I would willinglie serue as a Gunner, for the space of one whole yeare in the Galley, I shoulde, vpon his credit, haue libertie : which (seeing no remedie) I condiscended vnto.

Being thus at libertie, I was by the Captaine-
vrged

vraged often to goe to Masse, of whome I requested pradon; protesting that if I might bee perswaded by sufficient reason, and proote from the Word of GOD, that the Romish religion were the true doctrine of Christ, I would gladlie embrace it: in the meantime (seeing I was yet ytterlie of another opinion) I besought him to haue patience, for that a settled Religion, could not so slightlie bee remoued; which hee in hope of my conuersion (as hee termed it) in the ende granted.

Wit hin three dayes after, wee met three English ships to the sea-boord of *Bel-yle*, hauing in our companie a Man of Warre, so wee bare both of vs after these three ships, where I was commanded to make a shot, but perceiuing, that I went vnwillinglie to worke, they came about mee with their swords drawne, threatening if I would not shoote, they would kill me presently: so I shot at them, but neuer hit them, and the English ships discharged so couragiously at vs, that they compelled vs to recoyle.

After that time, abhorring to bee made the butcher of my native countrey men, I attempted all possible meanes of escape, either to the Kings side, or into *England*, but fearing to bee taken, I discovered my intent to a Captaine, being before his thraldome a Captaine, called *Le pine*, desiring him to lend mee his boy for my conduct

conduſt to the Caſtle of Blyn, ſeauen leagues diſtant from *Nauins*. But *Le Pyne* answered, that his father would ſhortlie bring his ranſome, and then promiſed to conuey mee with him: otherwiſe (ſaith hee) if you ſhould eſcape by the conduction of my boy, my miſerie ſhould be encreaſed, and my ranſome doubled; with whoſe perſwaſions, for that time ſatiſfied, I waited ſetter opportunitie.

Within foure dayes after, there arrived at the River of *Nauins* two & thirtie ſhips, and foure Gallyaſſes, which brought three thouſand and five hundred Spaniards vnto the Duke of *Mercuria*, amongſt whome manie (being ſick) were ſent vnto *Nauins* to be relieved; we alſo thinking to haue wintered there with the Galley: but there came preſentlie commandement ſhee ſhould be rigged, to carrie munition and money to the armie. So departing from *Nauins*, we came to the harbor of *Morbien*, thinking to haue founde the armie, but wee vnderſtood the whole ſteele were returned to *Spain*, foure Fly-boates, and two Gallyaſſes onelie excepted, which were gone to *Blauet*, to take the towne of *Flensbon*.

Our Captaine hearing theſe newes, went ſhoare the next morning, taking all the munition, and two hundred Spaniſh ſouldiers

with him, whom he conducted to the towne of *Vannes*. When they were departed, the Lieutenant being left to keepe the Galley, with no more than seauen and twentie, or thirne souldiers, I came vnto the captiued Captaine *Le Pyne*, and assured him, if he could finde meanes to breake or widen his manacles, there was now great likely-hood of his escape, with the rest of the slaues. *Le Pyne* hearing my words, askt counsell of a souldier in the Galley, who affected him dearely, and for his sake willingly consented to our enterprise, appointing in his watch to put tallow into the touch-holes of all the Calyuers, and after prime them; and I in my watch should widen *Le Pynes* manacles, which accordingly I did, purposing that wednesday morning, being the seauenth of Nouember last, to put our pretence in execution; but the wind being contrarie, wee referred it, till the next night: which sorted (through Gods suffe-
rance) to an happy end.

Vpon thursday morning, at three of the clock, I arose and called my other companion, being the Prouansal, with whome hauing counselled of the matter, I came to a Martiner, which was in the watch, saying, I could not sleepe, being shaken with an ague, therefore, if he pleased, I would watch for him till day,

day, to which he gladly consented, the Pro-
uanfall did the like by the souldier which
watched in the poope, so staying till wee
thought euery man was a sleepe, I came vnto
Le Pyne bidding him dispatch, and percei-
uing there was but one rapier for vs, I fained
my selfe to be verie sick, and came to a cham-
ber in the middest of the Galley, and demaun-
ded a little *Aqua Vitæ*, from whence I secret-
ly conueyed the Carpenters axe, and hid it in
the poope, and comming to *Le Pyne* said, now
dispatch come away or neuer, hee followed
presently, and I going before, blew out all the
Lampes in the Galley, that none might per-
ceiue him pace: so comming to a Scottishman,
who was appoynted to aduertize the other
slaues his companions, they should suffer no
souldiers that were in the prow to passe in-
to the poope. But as we passed into the poope,
Le pine not being perfect in the way, stumbled
at an Italian called *Nicolau*, who sodainely
waking, demaunded who was there? It is
your friend said I. And being further que-
stioned, whether I did watch, I answered
yea, and that I came to see, if it were faire
weather. So comming into the poope, *Le*
Pyne tooke the rapier, and I the axe, the Pro-
uanfall hauing nothing, and so I stept vnto
the Lieutenant and killed him: *Nicolau* the I-

italian awaking, and seeing how I strooke at his fellowes, caught me in his armes; saying, English traytor yeeld, or thou shalt dye. I called *Le Pyn* to help, who thrust at him: which he seeing, left me, thinking to haue caught *Le Pyn*, but I followed him so hard, that at two blowes wee feld him ouer bord. Then wee set vpon the rest, and slew thirteene of them: some leapt into the water, and foure or five getting into a boate, called aboard a ship which was at an ancker before vs, saying, shoote, shoote, the slaues rebell against vs.

But I perceiuing their purpose, and fearing that the ship would haue shot at vs, I got the yrons wherewith they binde and vnbinde the poore slaues, and gaue them to the Skor, saying, vnloose thy selfe, and light mee two Lynt-stocks and bring them for ward: so making the slaues haile forward the great cannon, and priming the rest of the peeces, I halid to the ship, and swore, if they in any wise attempted to hinder our libertie, I would presentlie sinke her, and with that shewed them my lynt-stockes light.

They of the ship hearing this, and the terrible noyse that the slaues made in breaking off their chaines, answered they woulde not hinder vs: so I cutting one of our cables, and weying another anchor, made the slaues

rowe out of the hauen, and being at sea vn-
loosed them all: and that night by the help of
God came to Bel-Ile, where hauing but 24.
loaues of bread, and small store of other vit-
tailes, being 153. slaues besides the Prouan-
fall, Le Pyne, and my selfe, wee passed the
time as well as wee could. The next mor-
ning wee set sayle, and on Sunday the xi. of
Nouember brought her into the towne of
Rochel: where shee dooth remaine for the
Kings vse.

Captaine Le Pyne, being at Rochel, was
perswaded to goe to the King for a recom-
pence, and in going was taken by the Lea-
guers of Poyters, and my selfe being sore hurt
returned to Rochel, and afterwards came in-
to England, hauing the Maior and gouernors
hands to their great Seale.

Thus did I, by the help of God, escape the
Spanish slauerie, the very Frenchmen them-
selues bearing no rule where the Spaniard is
in presence: they vse them as Dogges, the
Captaines of the galley haue beene Italians,
and other officers Spaniards, the most of their
galley-slaues haue beene Frenchmen, Flem-
mings, Scots, and English. Thus wishing
vnto my countri-men, to be warned by other
mens harmes, I end.

FINIS.



VWitnesses of the truth of this
matter.

John VWilkes of London.

John Harley.

VWilliam VVard.

Richard Bauance.

Richard Taylor.

Laurence Adams.

George Oliuer.

And vnder the great scale of Rochell.



